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January 1994

CDXC - The UK DX Foundation

Issue 87

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## CDXC OFFICERS 1993/1994

<b>PRESIDENT:</b>	<b>G6LX</b>	Ron Glaisher	Tel 081 654 1406 279 Addiscombe Rd., Croydon, CR0 7HY
<b>CHAIRMAN:</b>	<b>G3WGV</b>	John Linford	Tel 0734 733 745 Canberra Lodge, Heath Ride, Finchampstead, Wokingham, RG11 3QT
<b>VICE CHAIRMAN:</b>	<b>G3VKW</b>	Keith Evans,	Tel 0444 412 414 Littlefield House, Bolney Road, Ansty, Haywards Heath, RH17 5AW
<b>VICE CHAIRMAN:</b>	<b>G3NUG</b>	Neville Cheadle	Tel 0442 629 29 Further Felden, Longcroft Lane, Felden, Hemel Hempstead, HP3 0BN
<b>SECRETARY:</b>	<b>G0HXN</b>	David Mann	Tel 0344 761 937 106 South Meadow, Crowthorne, Berks, RG11 7HP
<b>TREASURER:</b>	<b>G4PFF</b>	Mike Potter	Tel 0767 677 792 38 West Street, Great Gransden, Sandy, Beds, SG19 3AU
<b>NEWSLETTER</b>	<b>G3PMR</b>	Alan Jubb	Tel/Fax 0767 677 913
<b>EDITOR:</b>			30 West Street, Great Gransden, Sandy, Beds, SG19 3AU
<b>AWARDS</b>	<b>G4DYO</b>	Brendan McCartney	Tel 0734 732 393
<b>MANAGER:</b>			123 Reading Road, Finchampstead, Wokingham, RG11 4RD
<b>CONTEST</b>	<b>G4WVX</b>	Bruce Gilson	Tel 0628 664 415
<b>COORDINATOR:</b>			3A Lincoln Hatch Lane, Burnham, Slough, SL1 7HA

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**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE: FEBRUARY 7th**

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## CHILTERN DX CLUB - The UK DX Foundation - Aims and Objectives

**From the Constitution:** *"The aim of the Club will be to promote excellence in HF operating, particularly DXing, through mutual assistance and by encouraging support of DXpeditions, the issue of achievement awards, or whatever other means is deemed to be appropriate"*

**From the Prospectus:** *"CDXC caters for amateurs with an interest in competitive activity on the HF bands (DXing, contesting, award chasing, etc.)"*

**Membership:** Membership of CDXC is open to any amateur or SWL who has 100 DXCC countries confirmed on the HF bands. New members must be proposed by at least two club members.

**Subscriptions:** The annual subscription is currently set at £10.00 for UK members, and £15.00 for overseas members. The subscription for new members joining between 1st January and 30th June is 50% of the annual subscription. Subscriptions become due on July 1st in each year, and should be sent to the Treasurer (address above).

**Newsletter:** This newsletter is published six times per year. Articles for publication should be sent to the Newsletter Editor (address above) by the published deadline.



## EDITORIAL

**Alan Jubb, G3PMR**

Happy New Year to all! I hope that 1994 brings all members health and happiness, as well as bags of DX! I'm writing this on a real wintry morning, a few days after Christmas - it's snowing heavily, and the outlook is very bleak. However, I trust that all had an enjoyable and happy Christmas, and that the waistline hasn't increased too much!

As editor of the Newsletter, it is always difficult to fill the pages with good material. However, I have been very fortunate recently, and my job has been made much easier, by the lengthy but fascinating description of Andrew, G0HSD's travels to northern Asiatic Russia. This issue of the Newsletter sees the start of another two part epic, this time by Roger, G3SXW, describing his superb DXpedition to Tristan Da Cunha. Both of these articles are characterised by their detailed descriptions of the planning that went in to the trips, and by details of their journey, and the country and people that they visited. Only a minor part of the articles is concerned with the operating aspects of the trip. Personally, I have found both articles absolutely intriguing, and a number of members have commented that their XYLS have found Andrew's article of great interest. However, I am conscious that some members may prefer to see more operating content in the articles, and would therefore like to know whether there are any strong views for or against articles of this type appearing in the Newsletter. Please let me know via the usual channels.

On a personal note, 1993 has been a good year for me. The big event, of course, was regaining full time

employment. On the amateur radio front, major improvements have been made to my station, with more planned for 1994. My DXCC score has gone up considerably, and is now verging on respectability!

On of the sadder happenings of 1993 was the death of Lloyd Colvin, who passed away in the US Hospital in Istanbul at 07.46 local time on 14th December. XYL Iris has returned to the USA. Lloyd and Iris gave me several "new ones" during their extensive series of DXpeditions, and I know that Lloyd will be sorely missed. Our thoughts are with you, Iris.

It's now late December, and Pratas has still not been activated. Will it be activated before Peter 1st? Peter 1st itself almost got canned - see separate article in this Newsletter. That's at least two big ones to look forward to in 1994. On the subject of VK9MM QSLs, John G3WGV advises that the cards should have arrived from the printers by now. However, QSL Manager VK4CRR has been busy with his own DXpedition to Christmas Island, and no doubt, will have a mountain of cards to deal with from that trip, so VK9MM QSLs may be slow in coming.

The Committee has been considering ways in which small (one/two man) DXpedition teams, originating from Eastern Europe and other countries, where there are extreme currency and postal problems, could be aided in the expense and chore of QSLing. The Committee is prepared to supply QSL cards for selected DXpeditions, and is looking for volunteers to act as QSL managers. Offers to David, G0HXN, please.



The CQWW contests are now behind us, and I know that many CDXC members were active in both events. In the CW event, G3PJT and I operated multi-single using Bob's call. This was a fairly eventful weekend for us, with problems with linears, CT crashing twice, and yours truly catching 'flu. Nevertheless, we had fun, learned much, and will do better next year.

I'm looking forward to meeting many members and their XYs at the CDXC Annual Dinner - please note that the date has been changed - see separate details. 73 Alan.

### **Jottings of the Secretary - Dave Mann G0HXN**

Well Christmas is once more upon us, and the usual rushing around at the last minute pretending that we enjoy it. (I do really, but I have to keep up a front for the station manager).

Well my last jottings certainly caused several different reactions, and many thanks to all of you who wrote or telephoned me, it was a real pleasure to speak to some of our more distant members, as well as some locals. Both the mention of insurance cover and QSLing was given equal time. As far as the insurance is concerned I am doing some research with the better known, and some of the lesser known insurance companies as to their cover for fax machines in private homes.

The question of QSL cards will I am sure continue to be a thorny subject for many years to come, but the consensus of opinion was that the national societies must get together to draw up a policy, (mind you though, it would be probably looked on the same as band plans), talking of which had I several calls regarding the demise of .525, this subject is on the agenda of the next

committee meeting. But it certainly has caused a strong reaction amongst some of you, all I can say is if you object write to the RSGB, and to the R.A. I most certainly will. As was pointed out to me "Not everybody wants or can afford packet", and if the current frequencies used were kept free from beacons every 2 minutes at 50 watts from some stations, badly set-up TNCs so that it takes 25 tries to get a full stop from Reading to Basingstoke, inefficient use of the spectrum is what is going to lose us frequencies, the private sector could make a fortune with our allocation, lets use it wisely.

By now you should have received a letter from Subscription Services Limited, I wonder how many of you read it before binning it. The third paragraph of the second section under payments by cheque etc. must be noted carefully: Anyone applying to renew (their licence) late will be treated as a new applicant. An application form will need to be completed and sent with all relevant pass certificates and payment to the Radio Licensing Centre. Does this mean that as a "NEW APPLICANT" it will result in the issue of a new callsign? As yet the relevant department has not replied to my letter, I shall watch this development with interest. I am sure we are all guilty of leaving renewal to the last minute, but watch out, there could be a surge of G0's ???.

At the last committee meeting I am pleased to announce that we agreed to sponsor Peter the 1st up to £300 from our Dxpediton fund. We also discussed the input by CDXC to the RSGB HF Convention at Windsor, which we agreed was first class, but as usual was left to the few. Next year we have the 30th Anniversary of IOTA, and we must start getting our act together now,



so as silly as it may seem, lets have volunteers now, to Neville, G3NUG.

Talking of IOTA, I noticed that here in Crowthorne a new ladies dress shop has just opened, yes its called "IOTA", maybe I can get them to sell directories for Roger.

May I congratulate Andy G0HSD on a most entertaining, and very graphic description of his trip to Russia, that needs a reprint in RadCom. One of the best pieces I have had the pleasure in reading over many years. Well done Andy, will you ever forget it? Finally may I take this opportunity on behalf of myself and Jenny my station manager, in wishing you all a very Happy Christmas, and a Healthy and Prosperous New Year. 73 and good DX. Dave

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### **RSGB INTERNATIONAL HF & IOTA CONVENTION and IOTA's 30th BIRTHDAY PARTY.**

The 1994 Convention will be held on October 7/8/9 at the Beaumont Conference Centre, Windsor, the venue for the last two highly successful events. As 1994 is the 30th anniversary of IOTA, the event is expected to attract many foreign visitors, and the nature of the event will be planned accordingly.

CDXC will again play a major part in planning and organizing the Convention. CDXC Vice Chairman Neville, G3NUG, is Chairman of the organizing committee, and other committee members at the time of writing are G4BWP, G4PFF, G3SJJ, G3PMR, G3OUF, G3KMA, G0HXN, many of whom are CDXC members. However, there is much work to be carried out in organizing such an event,

and more help is needed. If you can help in any way, however small, at any time between now and the event, please get in touch with G3NUG.

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### **1994 INTERNATIONAL DX CONVENTION**

The 1994 International DX Convention, hosted by the Southern California DX Club, will be held April 15-17 at the Holiday Inn-Plaza Park, Visalia, California. Pre-registration tickets are \$45 (postmarked not later than March 15 1994) and late registration fee is \$50. Registration includes Friday and Saturday night cocktail parties, all forums and technical sessions, convention patch, Saturday night banquet, and Sunday morning breakfast. The ARRL will be on hand to check DXCC cards. For information, contact Don Bostrom, N6IC (home 818 784 2590, work 310 334 8717). Mail registration to Don Bostrom, N6IC, 4447 Atoll Ave., Sherman Oaks, CA 91428.

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### **9N LICENSING**

According to Baldur, DJ6SI, it is extremely difficult and expensive for a foreigner to get a license to operate from Nepal. DJ6SI claims that the licenses issued for his 1993 9N operation were the first ever to have been issued in written form, and that all prior operations were therefore illegal. 9N1MM apparently had verbal authorisation to operate from the King of Nepal. However, Rusty, W6OAT says that he had written authorisation for his 1982 operation as 9N1OAT & 9N38.

It is very expensive for local amateurs to afford commercial gear - there is a 300% import duty! DJ6SI and colleagues are trying to find a way to get equipment to the local amateurs by pre-paying customs duty. Any help would be appreciated!



## CDXC ANNUAL DINNER

\*\*\* **DATE CHANGE** \*\*\*

The CDXC Annual Dinner will be held on **Saturday February 26th** and not as previously advertised. All bookings for rooms *should* have been transferred to the new date by the hotel. However, if you have booked a room, it might be safest to check for your self that the booking has been transferred. Apologies for any inconvenience caused. There are still a few places left; please contact David, G0HXN, if you wish to attend. Dress is Jacket & Tie, please. Time: 7 for 7.30. However, various Committee Members will be in the bar from around 6.00pm if you wish to socialise earlier! The venue is:

The Peacock Hotel  
Henton,  
Nr Chinnor,  
Oxfordshire.  
Tel 0844 353 891

The Peacock is signposted from the B4009, which runs from junction 6 on the M40 towards Princes Risborough. Travelling from the M40, the hotel is up a short road left off the B4009, after Chinnor.

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### **Peter I DXpedition 1994**

**Update Dec 21 1993.**

**'Balancing on the sharp  
edge between what is  
possible and what is not'**

**K0IR and ON6TT**

(From the UK PacketCluster Network)

As you know, Peter I is a very remote island. It is out of any normal route the Antarctic vessels sail. If, in the Antarctic summer season, 100 ships sail the Antarctic waters, only maybe 10 are equipped to break through the thick ice around Peter I. Of those 10, maybe 4 have helicopters on board. On our request, only two of them planned a detour to Peter I: the ship dropping us

and the vessel picking us up a couple of weeks later. The following is a true story of the Peter I expedition balancing on the sharp edge between what is possible and what is not. We have kept this as a secret from you, but now, with the problem solved, we hope you enjoy reading it!

### **PANIC**

Beginning November, expedition leader K0IR sent a fax to N4GCK, WA4JQS and ON6TT. Bad news: due to the uncertain economic situation in Russia, the Russian Antarctic Research Institute, responsible for our pickup ship, "could not guarantee" the transport back to South America. They could not even guarantee any pickup at all. Our charter company promised to do whatever possible in trying to solve this matter. They have very good relations with the Russian Institute, so we crossed our fingers and decided to keep the matter silent for a while. At this point, WA4JQS and N4CGK had assembled the remaining 40 crates of equipment. We decided to take the risk and ship it to our vessel in Montevideo anyhow, knowing that the money involved to do so was at risk. Crossing our fingers was in vain: On December 4th, Ralph faxed Peter with the news that the owner of our charter company just returned from St.Petersburg and the Russians pulled out of the deal. Nothing could change their mind, not even offering more money. They had tried to find alternative transportation but could not come up with anything. At this point it looked like we were very very close in having to cancel the whole expedition. This would be a financial and moral disaster for us, and a big disappointment for all DX-ers who supported us and looked forward to confirm their "last one needed". All of this, one month before



leaving for the Falklands... Ralph and Peter decided to keep this matter in strict confidence and came up with an action plan: Both would try to buy time from the charter company, and to look for alternative transportation. We divided the list of companies who potentially had other vessels in the Antarctic and started to fax and phone around the world. We contacted the Scott Polar Institute (UK), British Antarctic Survey (UK), the Belgian Polar Explorers Institute, the members of the De Gerlache expedition (Tnx-ON4TX for the useful telephone nrs), the Alfred Wegner Institute (Germany), several charter companies in the UK, Holland, Germany, and USA, the Chilean, Brazilian and Argentine Polar Institutes.... But in vain. No-one could help us. The few ice-breakers in a 400 mile zone of Peter I did not have helicopters on board, or were fully booked. On December 6th, Peter prepared to fly over to St.Petersburg to meet with the director of the Russian Polar Institute, but both visa and flights were very difficult to obtain on such short notice. Ghis, ON5NT, who has a lot of contacts in the DX-community, tried to find a reliable contact-man in St.Petersburg who could assist us as an interpreter. Through OH2BAD, we contacted Jukka, OH2BR who lives in St.Petersburg. In a fax to Jukka, we explained the situation and asked to assist us in a potential meeting with the Polar institute director. Ralph contacted a company chartering Twin Otter planes flying onto Antarctica. But.. they answered we had way too much equipment and they did not look forward to landing a plane on Peter I (which is never done before). Ralph and Peter both phoned to the charter company on Monday 6/12. They had given up and were very pessimistic of us finding any transportation by ourselves. After all, we have much less

experience than them, who have a network of worldwide contacts. On top of that, time was breathing in our neck. The vessel chartered to bring us to Peter I is too big to dock in Port Stanley, so all our gear would have to be unloaded in the last port of call in South America. This means that we had 7 more days to find another pickup vessel... After that deadline, we would have to cancel the whole operation, lose a lot of money and even worse: a personal disaster for all of us who worked for years preparing this trip.

### TURNING THE TIDE:

During the night of December 6th, we almost gave up. The search for alternative transportation turned out zip, so the Russian Institute was our last hope. Six days to go before the deadline. We sent, what we called 'our fax of the last hope', to the director of the Russian Polar Institute, asking for a meeting to discuss this matter over again. On December 7th, Peter tried to phone the director, but the phone was always engaged. So was the phone of the Russian Embassy in Brussels. He tried another phone number of the institute and after insisting, got the director's direct phone nr. It was engaged too for a long time but finally, we got through. The director was very friendly, and apparently spoke fluent English. He said immediately: "I was preparing a fax for you, AS I HAVEGOOD NEWS. Jukka phoned me this morning and I see the importance of your expedition and the international visibility of radio-amateurs. We can pick you up around Feb 12. Please come over to St.Petersburg as soon as possible so that we can discuss this matter. We will guarantee the pickup!" Putting the phone on the hook, Peter shouted of joy, made an appropriate Indian dance around



the shack and phoned Ralph at 06:00 am his time to announced the good news: "Guess what, we are back in business!". Finally, Peter got through to the Russian Embassy and all of a sudden, plane tickets to St. Petersburg were available too. The tide was changing. But... we still needed a fax confirming our phone call with the Russian. Peter was too afraid to miss this fax and did not dare to leave home. And finally, it arrived, three days before our final deadline. The paper was re-transmitted to our charter company asking to delay the unloading of the gear in South America. They confirmed by phone and wondered what 'spiritual powers' we used to convince the Russians. We answered proudly: "We are hams, we have friends in all parts of the world!"

### WHITE NIGHTS:

On December 16th Peter flew to St. Petersburg and met the head of the Russian Polar Institute on the 17th. We hoped it would not come to a financial discussion. As it turned out, the director was a very reasonable and friendly person. The institute is constantly confronted with the limited financial support from the government in these times of political and economical turbulence. They are trying to meet all deals the institute made for this Antarctic season with very limited means. The director stressed that the main reason for asking us to come over was to discuss a number of practical issues. So we did. The pickup ship is the Akademik Fedorov, the largest Antarctic research vessel around. She has two big freight helicopters aboard, capable of lifting 3.5 tons. She would sail out of the McMurdo base on Feb 2, arriving at Peter I on Feb 12 with a possible delay of a couple days. She would drop us off on either King George or Capetown. The cargo can be unloaded either on Capetown or in Rotterdam. We agreed how the helicopter landing on Peter I would be organized: what VHF frequencies to communicate on, how to prepare a landing spot, what meteorological data to gather for the pilot

etc... Also we will have a daily radio sked with the Fedorov as she is sailing towards Peter I. As such, we will be able to keep track of its progress and make a better estimate of the E.T.A. on Peter I. Once the ship arrives at the island, we have 6 hours to prepare the first crates, and a 24 hours period to get off the island. These and a lot of other practical details were discussed, but one thing was for sure: thanks to the help of our friends, and with a bit of luck - we have to confess - our team had once more turned the impossible back into a reality. This story hopefully shows you the perseverance of our team to make this expedition a reality. Now, at last, the team members can concentrate on the operating manual and the last practical details. We plan to release our operating frequencies and practices to the bulletins shortly. Once more, it is needless to say that all these efforts mean an enormous hidden cost in the expedition. Even just the phonebills for the three coordinators of our expedition in the past months total well over \$2,000! Once again we call upon your financial support as we have reached the limit of what each of us can personally contribute to this expedition. Europeans can send financial help to ON6TT, all others can contribute to AA6BB and KA6V. With a sincere thanks to ON5NT-Ghis and OH2BR-Jukka for their significant assistance in solving, what we hope was the last hurdle we had to take before leaving to the Falklands in mid January! For the Peter I expedition team, Ralph-K0IR and Peter-ON6TT.

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### PETER 1ST TEAM

From UK PacketCluster Network (G4DY0)

The DXpedition team will pass through the UK in two groups in mid-January. The first group will stay but a few hours during transit from Heathrow to Brize Norton. The second group, comprising WA4JQS, W6MKB, N4GCK, KK6EK, XE1L and HB9AHL, will be arriving on or about 16th January and departing 17th January. During their short stay team members will be accommodated and transported by



DXNS readers (*Ed: Many CDXC members involved*) living close to Heathrow/Brize Norton. On the evening of departure - 17th Jan - on behalf of DXNS I shall be arranging a buffet meal at a hostelry close to Brize Norton. ANYONE is welcome to come along and meet the team. The cost will be moderate. If YOU wish to attend please contact DXNS Office (tel 0734-732393) ASAP as numbers will be limited. Of course, everything could change at the last minute!!

### DX CALENDAR (*Tnx, DXNS*)

NOW	ZS8MI
NOW	Rotuma 3D2AG
Til Jan 10	SA-009 by I5JHW
Til Jan 11	S2 by SM6CPY
Til Jan 16	CQ8C (CT)
Til Jan 26	ZD8VJ by G4ZVJ
Til Jan 31	A35MQ by IV3UHL
Til Jan 31	XT2BW
Til Jan 31	C91BH
Til Feb 5	FM5WC by F3WC
Til Feb 23	NA-080 C6AGN
Til Mar	AN-017 FT5YE
Til Mar	T5/N3HQW
Til mid-Mar	ZD8M
Til Mar 31	T9/PA3DZN
Til Apr	FH/F5NCU
Til Apr	S Geo VP8CKB
Til Apr	XT2DK
Til Jun	8Q7AA by JG2XYV
Til Jun	5Z4JD by F2JD
Til mid-94	JW5NM
Til Aug	9X5AB by DF3ZJ
Til Aug 95	ET3JR by FD1PJQ
Jan 7-9	JA LF CW Contest
Jan 15-Feb 15	HS0ZAR by K3ZO
Jan 23-Feb 19	OC-046 FO0PT
Jan/Feb	SS P & P Rocks
Jan-Jul	JW5EBA
Feb 1-15	3D2MQ by IV3UHL
Feb 1-17	3Y PETER 1
Feb 15-28	ZK1(S) IV3UHL
Feb 23-Mar 2	C2 by W's
Mar 8-Apr 17	FO8 by IV3UHL
Apr 8-10	JA HF CW Contest
Jun	TZ6VV QRV again

### GB1OTA 1993

The following table lists the number of QSOs made by operators of GB1OTA:

CALL	QSOs	Days	Ave
G3RTE	800	1	800
G4BWP	581	1	581
G4DYO	526	1	526
G4OBK	400	1	400
G4ODV	356	1	356
G3KNU	263	1	263
G3PMR	262	1	262
G3NUG	245	1	245
G3KMA	622	3	207
G3NOH	338	2	169
G0NYL	156	1	156
IHFC	310	2	155
G4YRR	91	1	91
G4PFF	80	1	80
G3PJT	51	1	51
G4XRV	49	1	49
G3TOK	35	1	35
G3XMZ	58	2	29
G3GIQ	14	2	7
G4WFZ	0	2	0
TOTAL:	5237	27	194

### RSGB MEMBERSHIP

The RSGB have recently appointed a *Marketing Coordinator* (Justine Hodges). Justine has issued a challenge to all Affiliated Societies (of which CDXC is one). The challenge is to recruit fifteen new members to the RSGB. The reward is a fifty pound RSGB book voucher to the first club to send 15 valid application forms to Justine. If you know of anyone who wishes (or can be persuaded!) to join the RSGB, contact David, G0HXN, for an application form.

It's enough to give you grey hairs,  
To make you regret DXing for a minute,  
A nice fat envelope from the bureau -  
And not a single new one in it...



## ADVANCE CONTEST INFORMATION - *Bruce Gilson, G4WVX*

For those members who like to dabble in contests, below is a list of the bigger contests falling during the life of this issue of the Newsletter. Space does not permit inclusion of the full rules, so an abbreviated version is included together with the source of that information - thanks mainly go to RadCom and QST. For those who do not have access to either of these mags, I can supply a copy of the rules as published.

Some of the details are the rules from the previous year, as the latest rules have often not been published in the magazines in time for inclusion here.

Jan 28/30 CQWW 160m (CW) (QST Dec 92)  
2200-1600Z RST+Pfx or country abbrev. Work everyone

Feb 12/13 1st 160m (CW) (RC Aug 93)  
2100-0100Z RST+Ser+County 1.820-1.870 MHz only. Work everyone

Feb 19/20 ARRL (CW) (QST Dec 92)  
0000-2400Z RST+Power 160-10m No WARC  
Single-Op all band or single band, Single Tx  
Single-Op assisted all band; QRP Single-Op all band only  
Multi-Op Single, two or unlimited Tx  
W/VE work Non-W/VE, Non-W/VE work W/VE

Feb 25/27 CQWW 160m (Phone) (QST Dec 92)  
2200-1600Z RS+Pfx or country abbrev; work everyone

Feb 26/27 40m DX (CW) (RC Sep 93)  
1500-0900Z RST+Ser+County 7.000-7.030 MHz only  
UK work Non-UK, Non-UK work UK

Mar 05/06 ARRL (Phone) (QST Dec 92)  
0000-2400Z RS+Power 160-10m No WARC  
Single-Op all band or single band, Single Tx  
Single-Op assisted all band; QRP Single-Op all band only  
Multi-Op Single, two, unlimited Tx  
W/VE work Non-W/VE, Non-W/VE work W/VE

Mar 11/13 JARL International DX (CW) (QST Nov 93)  
2300-2300Z RS+Ser 80-10m No WARC  
Single-op single & multi-band; Multi-op multi-band  
Non-JA work JA, JA work non-JA

Mar 12/13 Commonwealth (CW) (RC Oct 93)  
1200-1200Z RST+Ser 80m-10m No WARC  
Single op only - no assistance whatsoever  
Single-band or Multi-band + SWL  
All QSOs in lower 30kHz of bands except for QSOs with novices  
above 21.030 & 28.030 MHz  
All UK is one call area, look out for HQ stns (Bonus)  
Commonwealth work Commonwealth (119 call areas)



# CQWW CW 1993 - Claimed Scores - Bruce Gilson G4WVX

Most of this information was put together by Nigel, G3TXF, whom I must thank for the effort. Thanks also to those who passed their scores direct to me.

<u>Multi-Multi</u>					<u>160m</u>	<u>80m</u>	<u>40m</u>	<u>20m</u>	<u>15m</u>	<u>10m</u>
G3YBT/P Ops: G3YBT, G3XMZ										
739Q	72Z	231C	405k	Q	120	72	148	205	183	11
				C	41	32	54	48	47	9
				Z	8	6	15	15	21	7

<u>Multi-Single</u>					<u>160m</u>	<u>80m</u>	<u>40m</u>	<u>20m</u>	<u>15m</u>	<u>10m</u>
ZF2WW Ops: G3SXW, K5VT, K7GE, KC7V										
5,801Q	155Z	462C	8.74M	Q	30	606	1,856	1,632	1,630	47
				C	28	71	102	122	96	43
				Z	14	22	30	36	31	22

GB5DX Ops: G3RTE, G4DJX, NZ1W, VE5ZX, G4XRV, G3VRY, G3NOH, G4JKS, G3OUF: Verulam										
4,351Q	155Z	490C	6.40M	Q	87	1,207	1,055	891	1,075	36
				C	47	89	114	99	105	36
				Z	7	26	34	33	36	19

G3LNS Ops: G3LNS, G3NKC, G3VHB, G4JGV										
3,760Q	158Z	515C	5.9M	Q	126	1,024	1,095	718	759	38
				C	58	97	130	95	98	37
				Z	12	25	36	32	32	21

G3PJT Ops: G3PJT and G3PMR										
1,410Q	107Z	342C	1.42M	Q	51	131	257	537	412	22
				C	28	50	92	78	77	17
				Z	5	13	24	27	28	10

G3WGV Ops: G3WGV, G4UXG, G0OPB and members of Reading ARC										
1,649Q	107Z	294C	1.4M	Q???						
				C	36	54	71	67	51	15
				Z	8	15	24	28	21	11

## GX0FUN Ops: G4WVX, G4WJS, G4DQW

1,440Q	95Z	296C	1.01M	Q	120	317	249	426	293	35
				C	40	46	58	66	60	26
				Z	7	11	14	24	24	15

<u>Single-Op Assisted (with Packet)</u>					<u>160m</u>	<u>80m</u>	<u>40m</u>	<u>20m</u>	<u>15m</u>	<u>10m</u>
G3XTT										
1,249Q	120Z	435C	1.52M	Q	128	217	202	241	409	52
				C	52	78	97	77	92	39
				Z	8	17	24	23	29	19

G3TXF										
1,150Q	129Z	421C	1.30M	Q	120	265	201	242	274	48
				C	50	78	107	72	78	36
				Z	9	19	31	25	26	19



# G5LP

657Q	65Z	210C	339k	Q	-	180	233	118	126	-
				C	-	54	70	39	47	-
				Z	-	11	21	15	18	-

GW4BLE 142Q 45Z 77C 42.7k Yes, and this was Steve operating CW too!

# G4OBK

54Q	32Z	48C	8.9k	Q	21	7	6	4	14	2
				C	18	7	5	4	12	2
				Z	5	4	6	3	12	2

# Single-Op All Band (No packet)

					160m	80m	40m	20m	15m	10m
G4BUO										
2,771Q	144Z	429C	3.5M	Q	120	735	370	822	660	64
				C	47	70	83	95	86	48
				Z	9	21	29	33	32	20

# G3MXJ

1,735Q	117Z	358C	2.0M	Q	86	428	323	538	332	28
				C	49	64	96	69	61	19
				Z	10	17	30	24	25	11

# G3TMA

1,022Q	91Z	240C	775k	Q	93	124	110	261	407	27
				C	35	32	46	46	59	22
				Z	8	9	16	19	27	12

# G0GKH

284Q	30Z	97C	69.0k	Q	-	44	75	157	8	-
				C	-	25	35	33	4	-
				Z	-	6	9	13	2	-

3A/G0SLY nilQ -Z -C nil Carl plagued by 'flu and busted rig in 3A.

# Single-Op Low Pwr -No Packet

					160m	80m	40m	20m	15m	10m
G3SWH										
1,214Q	95z	307C	916k	Q	85	307	242	337	227	16
				C	39	58	70	68	58	14
				Z	7	14	18	22	23	11

# G3NKS

551Q	59Z	184C	282k	Q	32	105	105	152	146	11
				C	24	37	45	34	35	9
				Z	4	9	11	12	16	7

# Single Band (160m)

# Single Band (80m) - Assisted

# Single Band (40m) - Assisted

# Single Band (20m)

GM3WOJ (Op=GM4CXM)

G4CNY

GW3YDX	1,102Q	19Z	75C	167k
G3WVG	616Q	??Z	90C	
G3RTU/P	197Q	17Z	59C	22.7k
	1,127Q	38Z	114C	542k
	1,490Q	36Z	109C	505k



Single Band (15m)                      GW8GT              1,618Q 35Z    117C    601k  
 (Op=G4IFB.....full GW8GT team not QRV in M/M or M/S due to problems with vandals.)  
    G3KDB              1,250Q 35Z    119C    480k

Single Band (15m) - Assisted              G4PDQ              332Q    26Z    77C    81.9k

<u>ORP-5W</u>					<u>160m</u>	<u>80m</u>	<u>40m</u>	<u>20m</u>	<u>15m</u>	<u>10m</u>
<u>G4BWP</u>										
1,001Q	86Z	291C	787k	Q	67	171	178	275	281	29
				C	35	43	61	66	66	20
				Z	6	8	12	22	25	13

## CONTESTING AND ALL THAT

### *Don Field, G3XTT*

Alan asked for input to the Newsletter, and suggested that those who had participated in CQWW might care to share their experiences.

This seemed like a good idea, but started me off on a series of related thoughts which may or may not strike a chord with CDXC members.

Several issues of the CDXC newsletter ago I seem to remember Bren, G4DYO, in his usual controversial way, saying that there was too much contest coverage in CDXC. The gist seemed to be that CDXC was for DXers and that there were plenty of other clubs to cater for contesters. All I can say to Bren is that perhaps he would like to tell me which clubs he has in mind, because I have a serious problem in thinking of any! This came to mind again recently when there was a suggestion in DXNS (by the very same G4DYO) that perhaps there is scope in the UK for a newsletter of some sort for active contesters. I gather that the response to this suggestion has been somewhat muted, possibly because no one wants to be fingered to take the job on!

It may well be that CDXC isn't the right body for contesters to be associated with, though my own argument has always been that contesting and DXing have much in

common as the major competitive aspects of amateur radio. On my visits to northern California where they have both the Northern California DX Club (not to be confused with the Northern California DX Foundation) and the Northern California Contest Club, I have noticed that many of the members are common to both.

I'm not sure that we need a separate UK Contest Club, as I think it would detract from CDXC, but what do CDXC members think? In fact, my own contesting experience has been that the most successful multi-op contest operations in which I have been involved have not been under the auspices of a particular club at all, but have been when a group of like-minded contesters get together on an ad hoc basis.

I do like the idea of a contests newsletter, particularly now that coverage of RSGB events in RadCom is limited and given that not everyone can afford to subscribe to CQ, QST, etc. to get coverage of the major international contests (CQWW, WPX, ARRL, WAE, etc.). The ARRL's National Contest Journal is an excellent example of what might be possible, but with much more of a UK/European focus. Indeed, the word European might be the clue - there probably isn't enough interest in the UK alone to justify such a venture, but how about having a newsletter serving the whole of Europe. After all, the more serious HF contesters are always interesting in comparing their performance on a pan-European scale, not



just how they are doing against other UK contesters.

Perhaps another approach would be to have a "Contest Chapter" in CDXC, with a separate newsletter, and a small additional subscription to cover the costs of production.

Anyway, having sewn a few seeds, now a few reminiscences on this year's CQWW events. I was at G0KPW for the Phone leg and this year we had some 12 masts and towers on site for the largest amateur radio station ever assembled in the UK. The 45kVA generator was pretty impressive too! We were chasing our second-in-world score for a second time (In how many other sports do UK teams do so well? Certainly not in football ...). As it happens, it looks as though we have been beaten by one of the Caribbean groups as well as by EA9UK. We don't know about the other European entrants. However, as always it was great fun and we really are pushing the limits of technology in a way which straightforward DXing doesn't do. No scope in contests for taking hours, or even minutes, to work a rare one. The aim is to knock off needed multipliers within one or two calls. Hence we go in for computer modelling of antennas to achieve maximum gain (our Cushcraft monobanders are much improved following computer-inspired modifications), pay attention to antenna height to cater for different arrival angles and, of course, look to the Cluster to be working at peak performance during the contest. We also use every facility available in K1EA's CT software, from the voice card to radio and packet interfaces and full networking between operating positions. Even a 486 PC is barely fast enough to handle "check partial" when it has 10,000 QSOs to check through while handling all these other functions at the same time!

In the CW event I had a go at single-op assisted from home which was quite a revelation. It was great fun. I remained

rooted to my operating chair for the first nine hours of the contest for fear of missing a spot, and only broke away in the end to answer the call of nature. However, not having the G0KPW station at my disposal, it was usually frustrating to get to the DX station's frequency only to hear a massive packet-generated pile-up already in progress with all the big multi-ops in there calling, and no chance for little-gun G3XTT (TH5 only at 40ft right now, Butternut on 40, and 40ft high wire antennas for 80 and 160). Often it was best to come back 20 minutes or so later, by which time the pile-up would be considerably smaller. In the end I am not convinced that packet assistance actually helps a single op's score. Indeed, it may even hinder it unless you have a particularly effective station, but it certainly gets the adrenaline flowing! It is also satisfying as the contest progresses to see fewer and fewer spots coming up in the spots window, not because the Cluster is any less busy, but because CT is filtering out those you have already worked.

The claimed scores will no doubt be reported elsewhere in this newsletter but, again, it is probably worth commenting that the majority of the high UK achievers in both legs, whether single-ops or as operators at the big multitis, were CDXC members. Keep it up!

Don, G3XTT

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## WELCOME!!

On behalf of the Committee I would like to welcome David Mawdsley, G3POG (Formby, Merseyside) and Ken Chandler, G0ORH (Newbury, Berks) to the CDXC. I hope you will both enjoy being members of CDXC, *The UK DX Foundation*, and that you will get involved in the various projects throughout the year.

Dave Mann, G0HXN Secretary.



## PACKETCLUSTER TIPS

Those members who log on to GB7DXH or GB7YDX (and possibly other nodes) will have seen the tip that comes up as part of the "connected" message. The tip is selected at random from the following list, on an hourly basis. I think that this is such a good idea that I asked David, G3OUF, sysop of DXH to provide the list for publication. The list was originated at GB7YDX, and has been added to by G3OUF. Ideas for additional tips would be welcomed by G3OUF.

- TIP: Do TY/F GOODUSE for advice on good Clustering - Please use the rules!
- TIP: DIR/S 9G will list messages containing "9G" somewhere in the title
- TIP: Each ANNOUNCE/FULL can result in over 1000 msgs - only use when VITAL!
- TIP: Find how good a spotter you are! Just type SH/HFSPOTS then your call
- TIP: Find out about upcoming contests by SH/HFTEST NOV (or DEC, JAN etc)
- TIP: If you don't want to see ANNOUNCEs, type SET/NOANN. SET/ANN re-enables
- TIP: SET/NOHERE brackets your call in the user list, it means 'not available'.
- TIP: SH/ACCESS <call> shows how often <call> uses the GB7DXH cluster node
- TIP: SH/ANN shows the last five urgent announcements made on the cluster
- TIP: SH/CLUSTER shows the number of nodes, number of UK users and DXH uptime
- TIP: SH/DX 'IOTA' show spots with a comment containing IOTA (or other text)
- TIP: SH/DX 1296000-1300000 shows DX spots in the frequency range given (kHz)
- TIP: SH/DX 7A\* shows spots containing "7A" in call, eg UL7AA, VK7AB, 7A2DD
- TIP: SH/HEAD P2 shows distance and bearing to P2 and from P2 back to you
- TIP: SH/HFSPOTS TOP10 or SH/VHFSPOTS TOP10 shows who makes most HF/VHF spots
- TIP: SH/PREFIX ZX shows all prefixes known to DXH starting with ZX - eg ZX0/F
- TIP: SH/ST <call> shows all details DXH knows about <call> and his QRB/QTF
- TIP: To add an additional route to the QSL database, use UPDATE/QSLNEW/APPEND
- TIP: Use REP/D to reply to a message you have just read and delete original
- TIP: Use SH/QSL to check the QSL database on DXI, UPDATE/QSLNEW to alter info
- TIP: Use SH/SUN JA to find the sun rise/set times in JA (or other) call areas
- TIP: SH/DX 80 9G will give the last five 9G spots on 80 metres
- TIP: SH/MEMBER <call> shows if <call> is a member of the GB7DXH Support Group.
- TIP: For CONTEST info try SH/HFTEST, SH/VHFTEST or TYPE/CONTEST FIXTURE.(V)HF
- TIP: Only use ANN/FULL for TIME SENSITIVE info which can't possibly wait.
- TIP: Set up your USERCMD properly if you want to filter which DX spots you get
- TIP: Use TALK to answer an ANNOUNCE - not another ANNOUNCE.
- TIP: Have you joined the GB7DXH Support Group ? For details SP GB7DXH
- TIP: SH/MUF ZD9 tells you the current MUF for Tristan da Cunha!
- TIP: SH/H PY tells you the correct bearing for Brazil!
- TIP: SH/MUF ZD9 tells you the current MUF for Tristan da Cunha!
- TIP: SH/SUN ZD9 tells you the sunrise and sunset times for Tristan da Cunha!
- TIP: If you are not a member of the GB7DXH Support Group - SP GB7DXH for info.
- TIP: SH/ACCESS <callsign> shows how many times the cluster has been accessed.
- TIP: If you often drop out, a small beam is far better than an omni antenna.
- TIP: WX is for weather WARNINGS, not for saying what a nice day it is!
- TIP: Dropping out on a regular basis? You need antenna directivity and gain.
- TIP: Please DELeTe messages that you have read. It does help Cluster operation
- TIP: SH/Member <call> tells you if you are a member of the DXH Support Group
- TIP: Are you a member of the GB7DXH Support Group? Try SH/Member <call>
- TIP: If you often drop out remember that a small beam is better than an omni.
- TIP: P L E A S E delete your mail messages when read!
- TIP: Please delete private messages when you have read them. Thank you ...
- TIP: SH/QSL <call> may help give you a needed and up to date QSL address.
- TIP: Are you a member of the Chiltern DX Club? If not SP G0HXN for info.



## PROFILE-G4DYO

My interest in radio started in the fifties when I was about 12 - trying to wire up headphones to my parents' radio to prevent them from going bananas while I listened to the Goon Show! I later acquired an Ivalek crystal set and rendered the house roof totally unusable to the local starlings by festooning it with wire (aerials?). Later a local friend obtained a large "domestic" set which had short wave bands and we used to listen to oceanic aviation communications - ah! the days of the Super Constellation. A few years later the boy-friend of an older cousin gave me an old army rx (from a tank?) which tuned from around 1.6-4 MHz AM and I heard my first amateur transmissions, G3DCZ and G3MES on the 160m Sutton & Cheam AM net, and whom I was to eyeball for the first time some 27 years later.

The old army rx provided enough ham interest until my late teens but my passion for aircraft demanded a VHF receiver and a little super-regen rx kit from Johnsons Radio of Worcester, which tuned from 90-150 MHz was the bees-knees. The fact that it QRMd every TV within 100 yards was unknown to me at the time. Aviation communications, and SWLing with the army and domestic sets maintained my interest for a good few years. I always wanted a ham ticket, but maths was never my best subject and I resigned myself to being an SWL for ever.

In 1967 I married Ruth and we went to live in Tripoli, Libya, taking with us a shiny new Lafayette "communications receiver" (I think it cost £18 in Lisle Street). Wires were soon draped over our flat roof and many hours were spent SWLing the ham bands and we always listened to Radio Peking at 2230 before turning in - not so much for the programme content, but the signature tune was tremendous!

When we returned to the UK I took the plunge and bought a Yaesu FR-50B rx, which made the Lafayette sound pretty punk. The FR-50B provided many hours of listening and I used to participate in the SWL ladders in SWM, ably run by Justin Cooper (I know who that really was, but I'm not telling!). I never ceased to be amazed at the DX I pulled in with simple wire antennas and the ham bug really bit hard. Once we

settled in Finchampstead I plucked up all my courage and sat the RAE - and passed first time. What a fool I had been not to sit it earlier! I already had a TA-33 installed for SWLing and a new FT-101 was acquired as soon as the RAE pass slip arrived. I started work on the CW immediately (no Class B ticket for me) and passed the exam a few weeks later. The ticket arrived on 20 March, 1975 and I was QRV immediately - 36 countries in the first week, 100 in the first month, 200 in the first year. My Phone DXCC certificate is dated 29 June, 1976, the magic 300 was reached in February, 1980 and Honor Roll (Phone and Mixed) in March, 1983 with a contact with ZL8AFH - remember that older CDXC members?. The full whack was achieved on SSB in August, 1991, when Romeo signed XY0RR, but there are still a few to go on CW. My No.1 Honor Roll Plaque is proudly displayed in my shack along with other awards achieved over the years, e.g. WAZ (Phone & CW), 5BWAZ (one 80m contact needed for the full 200), IOTA, WAP, etc, etc. Among the certificates from countries world-wide the Bermuda Award wins hands-down. It's a beautiful award and well worth trying for; and it ISN'T easy to get.

My time "at the top" was fairly short-lived as a year or so back I decided to cease QSLing entirely. I haven't used the buro in either direction for many years and there is so much fraud in QSLing that the possession of a card no longer confirms that a proper QSO took place. Apart from the existence of forged cards many on-air contacts simply do not take place, either because reports have been relayed or, in the most despicable cases, when one amateur uses another's call to secure a "place in the log". Years ago QSL cards had a real meaning, and they still do for extra-special contacts, but for the average run of the mill contacts they are a waste of space. I can work anywhere in the world by radio as easily as using the phone so why do I need a scrap of paper to tell me I've done it? I do wish that more award sponsors would follow the example of those who do not require cards. NZART operates an "honesty" policy and issues its prestige awards based on log information. When I collected my WAP the Award Manager said he was confident that there was no more fraud than if cards were required. By all means retain QSLing as a souvenir of a notable radio contact, but not for the



ridiculous nonsense of award collecting, when substantial numbers of contacts are fraudulent anyway.

Although I have worked all Current DXCC Countries I still chase band countries and my score is not too good, as the recent table in DXNS proved! The LF scores are very low, due to a) having only a small garden and b) only operating during "social" hours - I would never consider staying up all night for contests, etc., so there are some LF openings I shall always miss. But, there's a lot of work to do on 12m and 17m which will keep me occupied for a while and I still need to really get going on 30m. However, as far as radio goes I shall always be primarily an SWL and, not being a rag-chewer, the majority of my transmissions are of the "59 QSL" variety - boring stuff. Shack equipment includes receiving gear for 0-2,000 MHz and most modes. I love receivers and spend a great deal of time SWLing the commercial bands, especially Air VHF, which has fascinated me for the last 30+ years. I've tried most modes too, except satellite - can't see any interest in repeater working, even if the thing is in the sky!

After my Wife, Ruth, and our sons, I have a number of interests apart from radio: bird watching, rifle shooting, UFOs, Crop Circles, 60s & 70s pop music, aviation, antique silver, etc. Amateur radio slots in roughly half-way along, after the "serious" hobbies of bird-watching and shooting, which I share with Ruth, and rightly placed amidst the "loony" subjects of UFOs and Crop Circles. There's plenty to keep me occupied so roll on retirement!

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There was a DXer named Bren,  
Who'd call a weak rare one, and then..  
If he couldn't quite tell,  
Who answered, he'd yell:  
"You're Fifty-Nine Plus, say again"

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## **DXING IN HUDSON'S BAY**

### **Martin Atherton**

### **G3ZAY (NU2L/VE8)**

Andrew's article in the last newsletter on the Russian Arctic prompted some reflection on comparisons with the North American

equivalent - Canada's North West Territories. There are many of the same problems including alcoholism, unemployment, and access by native people to the cash economy which dominates their settlements. But there is far less industry. Although there are some mines there is no refining or processing and until recently the biggest activity was support for the DEW line installations.

Life in the Canadian Arctic essentially relies on government handouts; welfare payments, building subsidies, government jobs, etc. The 70,000 or so Northerners cost the Canadian tax-payer at least C\$1Bn each year.

There has been some attempt to promote native art-work but one can't help feeling that a lot of expensive junk is being put on the market. Carving prices seem to be based on weight rather than artistic merit and I saw several seals that probably started as whales until the carver's hand slipped! And if the seal gets into the wrong shape - no problem, stick a cocktail stick in one end and you have a narwhal!

A big difference with Russia is transportation - the NWT has fast reliable jet service between major centres and HS748 or Twin-Otter connections to all the small settlements. Everyone has their tale of how they were stuck in some ghastly spot for weeks because of bad weather, but in general the planes get through. Several people told us that First Air pilots would land in anything, but Calm Air ones frequently wimped out.... which sounded like a recommendation for the latter to me.

Another difference is pricing. Even the locals must pay a small fortune for their tickets with a weekend break from Igloolik to Iqaluit costing over L500. Fortunately one airline - First Air - has a special tourist deal; only L500 for the first two flights and L50 for each subsequent flight on their network. Not too bad if you're visiting more than one



settlement, especially as they serve Ottawa, Montreal, and Yellowknife as well as most of the tiny hamlets.

My first stop this year was to be Cape Dorset on Dorset Island (IOTA NA156), a 1 hour westerly hop from Iqaluit flown three times a week by First Air's HS748's. Tom, WT2O, and I set out from Ottawa at 8.00 a.m. one August Monday on the daily 727 service via Montreal and Fort Chimo (Kuujuak) reaching Iqaluit at 2.00 p.m. with an onward connection at 2.40.

Cape Dorset is a 1,000 strong Inuit community described in the guide books as the New York of the North - a reference to the large number of Inuit artists and sculptors living there. They were certainly geared up for tourists; we had a welcoming committee of young Inuit women at the airport, and Sandy, the hotel owner, was there to run us down to his establishment - the Kingnait Inn. (Kingnait means mountainous land in Inuktitut.)

The hotel was, unusually for the Arctic, a two storey building; and was supported by a steel framework which provided a level platform above the uneven rocky ground. The platform included a substantial balcony/patio on which we erected the Butternut with radials laid out across the decking. We were QRV within 45 minutes and were producing minimal TVI to the satellite system even with the KW1000 linear running flat out.

On the flight from Iqaluit we had met up with Cape Dorset's only resident amateur, Jim Freda, VE8JF, and had hatched a plan for an outing to Sakkiak Island about 2 miles South of Dorset Island the following day. Jim agreed to lend us a battery for some /P operation and Sandy found an old Inuk (Inuit is plural, Inuk singular in Inuktitut) prepared to run us out there in his boat. The weather seemed perfect with the temperature up to +4C and we set out in high spirits.

Taqtu, the old man's daughter came along as an interpreter and her uncle turned up to act as ice look-out. Once out of the straits between Dorset and Mallik Island we were into drifting pack ice and the look-out, kneeling in the bow, used arm signals to guide the boat around the larger chunks. Sakkiak Island proved to be unapproachable, with at least half a mile of dense pack ice around it but we were able to land nearby at Umiak Island and arranged to be picked up at around 4.00 p.m. As Taqtu and her family disappeared around the corner of the island we raced to set up the Butternut and were soon ready to transmit. But disaster struck - Jim's battery was completely flat and though we could hear people calling us, the volts dropped away and the FT890 shut down as soon as we tried to transmit. We were left with 6 hours to kill on a deserted Arctic island.

Exploration took a couple of hours but we eventually filled in the afternoon with a new game of Arctic bowls. Throw a stone onto a passing ice floe and see how many more stones you can get to land close to it!

We were very pleased to see the Inuit returning in the evening, having been slightly worried that the ice might get too dense for them to get back to us. At least they had had a good day out; the boat was full of butchered caribou complete with antlers, heads, and huge slabs of meat. I had to take a picture, which immediately prompted the old man to try his limited English "You Greenpeace?" I settled for a simple denial and decided to forget the odd donation or two I've sent their way in the past!

We were soon back in town, with the Butternut back on the balcony, and worked through the night to satisfy any outstanding demand for NA156. Wednesday morning saw us at the airstrip for the weekly First Air flight westwards to Coral Harbour on Southampton Island (NA007).



It was clear that the weather was getting worse as we headed away from Cape Dorset and we just managed to touch down through the low cloud and driving rain at Coral Harbour. We saw only grey mist from the minibus shuttle as it bounced across the tundra for the 7 mile journey into the settlement and were soon deposited in the mud outside the rather shabby hotel. First impressions were not helped by the lack of electrical power. It seemed that an overnight storm had taken down the power lines serving the hotel leaving it without heat or cooking facilities. Todd, the cook/manager/cleaner, showed us to a room with unmade beds, black bin liners tacked over the window, and a carpet assembled from at least half a dozen variegated off-cuts. A bargain at L80 a day! We learned later we should have stayed at the rival establishment run by an Inuit family. Our place was controlled by the Co-op committee which wrangled endlessly over even trivial items of expenditure. No manager had lasted more than a few months. Todd explained he was officially paid for a few hours a day to cook the meals but did some unpaid cleaning and bed-making when the place got too squalid.

Power was restored by early evening and we were on the air, with pile-ups surprisingly large considering VE8PW had been active from the island only two weeks earlier. The weather stayed appalling throughout and it began to look as though our Friday flight to Rankin Inlet might be cancelled. The wind speed was a steady 30 knots - but fortunately straight down the runway and the HS748 made it in OK. The airport is surprisingly large for such a small community, but we learned that it is the surviving part of a much larger facility constructed during World War 2 as a refuelling stop for aircraft being ferried to Europe. A second runway has been allowed to deteriorate and although the hundreds of huts have been dismantled, millions of empty

fuel drums remain scattered across the tundra.

Rankin, another hour westwards, was a completely different picture; blue skies, light winds and a temperature up at +14C. We were met at the airport by local outfitter Bill Gawor who had contracted to take us out to one of the islands and kit us out with suitable camping equipment. We had been greatly helped with preparations for this trip by Mike, VE8AJ, and Brian, VE8GO, both resident in Rankin.

We had originally hoped to visit Marble Island, a major historical site, some 30kms east of Rankin. As its name suggests, the island is formed almost entirely from marble and gives the appearance of a summer iceberg. The Inuit have many myths associated with the place and insist that first time visitors must crawl up the beach to appease the local spirits. Failure to do so results in death within a year.

The island certainly has an eerie history, a British expedition led by James Knight perished there in 1719 (what little evidence exists is consistent with a massacre by the Inuit) and its natural harbour, the only one in the Bay area, was a popular over-wintering spot for British and American whaling ships in the 19th century.

Sadly, Bill disclosed that he had struck a rock when bringing a film crew back from the island the previous day and had put his outboard out of commission. His boat was down to the small reserve outboard which could barely scrape up a few knots so we were limited to islands close to town. I wasn't too disappointed as we were on the edge of polar bear country and it would probably be safer to stay close to human habitation. After a quick visit to the supermarket we were on our way for the 3 km crossing to Thompson Island and were soon struggling ashore with Bill's heavy duty Arctic camping equipment. His tent alone



must have weighed more than the rest of our equipment combined! Bill took some time to assess our expectations - his customers range from those requiring a full 4 star hotel to be set up in the wilderness, through to a minority who feel cheated if they haven't slept on animal skins and lived on raw seal blubber!

I was a little concerned that our water container was empty. "Just find a lake and fill it up" was Bill's comment. "You wouldn't want town water - it tastes of chlorine. But don't forget to boil the shit out of it. All the little wriggly bugs just vanish after about 5 minutes". Luckily we had plenty of Coca Cola!

"What about polar bears?" I asked. "Haven't had any here for a couple of weeks - the wildlife people scared them away" was the reply. "But just in case you meet one I'm going to leave you with this .303 rifle and some flares. Just fire a shot in the air and most bears will run off. If that doesn't work, aim just in front of them and try to kick-up some dirt in their face. Failing that you'll just have to get them in the spine!" There then followed a 1 minute lesson on rifle basics.

"The only safe bear is a distant bear" I had read on the posters but there seemed to be a problem spotting one coming. Thompson Island had a lot of white boulders strewn across the landscape and as the sun went in and out behind clouds, white dots in the middle distance flickered in and out of sight. There could have been a whole army of bears coming!

The best way to forget about hazards seemed to be to get immersed in the pile-up for what was an IOTA new-one and we were QRV around midnight zulu time. The following day, Saturday, Bill stopped by with some fresh water and a CB transceiver for us and we were visited in the afternoon by two schoolteachers, Alan Everard and Bill Belsey, out prospecting. (A small

fortune in gold had been discovered about 500m from our QTH in the 1930s) Alan and Bill were intrigued by the capability of our equipment and asked if we would set up the station in the Rankin school on Monday morning to form the basis for that day's lessons.

QRT time was mid-afternoon on Sunday. Bill took us back to town and we accepted a welcome offer from Alan to sleep at his QTH before our appearance at school. Bill turned up with his slides of Marble Island and treated us to a personal presentation of the show he gives tour groups, though he had to fight continual interruptions as people dropped in to meet the crazy hams or to sell wildlife carvings.

The following morning Murphy struck in the form of a solar flare which virtually wiped out the bands. My introductory talk rather fizzled out when I tried to show all the different countries we could hear on 20 metres. A lot of hiss and a fluttery OH signal was about the size of it! Fortunately the OH came back to my call so something was salvaged. Conditions had improved a little by the second performance and we hooked up with Chris Pedder, G3VBL, a schoolteacher himself, who was able to talk directly to the kids.

Monday afternoon we jumped on the Calm Air flight south to Churchill, Manitoba, where we hoped to get out to the Fox Islands - a new IOTA group. Our contact was Jack Batstone, who I had discovered after putting my requirements by phone from Cambridge to the local tourist information office. Gary, VE3XN, maintained the link with Jack while we were on the move but we still had no idea if the weather would be suitable or what time Jack would want to set out. The islands are surrounded by extensive reefs and mud flats at low tide so can only be safely approached on a rising tide.



We finally got through to Jack at about 1030 p.m. on Monday night and learned that because there were strong winds forecast for the afternoon, he was only willing to go out at dawn on the rising tide and return three hours later on the same tide. Despite the predictable complaints from disappointed IOTA chasers, we had come too far (and spent too much on airline tickets) to pass up the chance of a short operation.

The following morning saw us embarked on Jack's speedboat for the 60 minute journey to the islands. We were accompanied by two local Indian hunters who were hoping to find caribou but were also along to ward off the polar bears which were certain to be in residence. Sure enough there was an enormous bear watching as we approached, but its immense girth showed it was well fed and not interested in snacking on visitors. After a few warning shots it took off for its den.

Tom and I leapt ashore with the Butternut already partly assembled and were QRV in minutes. The North Americans weren't out of bed and propagation to Europe was still poor after the flare but we managed about 300 QSOs before Jack decided the tide was getting dangerously low and ordered us back into the boat. Our sudden departure resulted in rumours that we had been chased off by the bears!

On Wednesday we returned to Ottawa the long (but cheaper) way. Churchill to Eskimo Point to Rankin Inlet; new flight from Rankin to Coral Harbour to Cape Dorset to Iqaluit; and finally a 727 connection from Iqaluit to Ottawa (just making it in and out through the mist and 100 foot cloudbase). Tom made it home on Thursday in time to work F5JYD in Labrador while I had the frustration of listening to the excitement from the car park at Ottawa airport.

Where do I go next? Somewhere in the Arctic for sure. Watch this space.....

## **RSGB 1994 IOTA CONTEST**

### ***Phil Whitchurch, G3SWH***

I must confess that, as a keen CW only contester and island chaser, I was very disappointed to find that the inaugural contest in 1993 made no provision for any CW activity whatsoever. I had been previously more than a little perturbed that the IOTA Programme was heavily biased towards SSB operation and that, as a result, my 200 plus score (made exclusively on CW) was unlikely to ever reach anywhere near the top scores of 500 or more. I contacted Roger Balister, G3KMA and voiced my concerns to him as I felt that this was yet another, and fairly major step on the slippery slope towards the IOTA programme being perceived (and indeed represented) as a SSB only award.

Roger expressed the same concerns as myself, but explained that the rules of the contest had been drawn up by the RSGB HF Contests Committee, and that whilst the rules for the 1994 event were certain to be extensively reviewed by them, any proposal for a joint CW and SSB contest would be frowned upon by the RSGB and by the IARU who, in the interests of co-existence with the non- contest fraternity, do not feel it fair or politic to take up both ends of the bands with contest traffic on the same weekend. As the much more popular IARU HF Championship does exactly this every year during the second weekend of July, it seems that some double standards are being applied somewhere!

I then approached Chris Burbanks, G3SJJ in his capacity as Chairman of the RSGB HF Contests Committee, who explained that the original concept of the IOTA Contest was that there were more RSGB CW contests than SSB, and that this was an attempt to redress the balance. He also explained that possible solutions were:

a) to extend the time from 24 to 36 hours, and have a CW section following the SSB



section, but that the 24 hour period nicely covers propagation to all parts of the world and a 36 hour period split into two would give neither section a full bite of the cherry.

b) to extend the time from 24 to 48 hours, with a 24 hour CW section following on (or preceding) a 24 hour SSB event, making the two events separate, i.e. in fact two contests.

c) to hold the CW event on another weekend, but as a number of entrants in the 1993 event travelled to 'unusual' locations to many island chasers' benefit, they would not be likely to do it twice in one year. Furthermore, to try to slot a second weekend into the existing international contest calendar would not be an easy task.

d) to hold the event concurrently on CW and SSB, with specific 'Contest Only' sections of the bands set down and rigidly enforced.

Options b) and d) would both appear to me to be workable solutions, but there are many questions to be addressed, such as would an island multiplier count on both CW and SSB, how to stimulate CW activity with (possibly) a points incentive, etc., and I do understand that these specific matters need to be dealt with separately by the RSGB.

Some of the members of the HF Contests committee feel that they would like to see the SSB event settle down before introducing a CW section. My own view is that unless the 1994 event includes a CW section, the international perception will be that both the IOTA Contest and the IOTA programme are for SSB only, and that will be a perception which will be very difficult to reverse.

*(Ed: this is a slightly abbreviated version of Phil's original article. I believe that the 1994 IOTA Connote will now include a CW category. I thought it was still worth publishing this article in abbreviated form as it raises issues outside the contest itself).*

## "Another Man's Poison?" Steve Telenius-Lowe P29DX/VK9MM op.

The comments on the VK9MM operation by Bren G4DYO and other correspondents whom he quotes in his article "One Man's Meat?" in the November 1993 CDXC Newsletter prompt me to reply and perhaps offer an inside view, which may not always be clear from the other end of the pile-up.

How I agree with Bren's comments that can probably best be summed up "you can't please all the people all the time". Before I go any further, let me acknowledge Bren's comment that in his opinion "the team did a superb job". I've known Bren for a number of years and know that he does not go in for unwarranted flattery, so such praise is praise indeed! On behalf of the rest of the Mellish Reef group, thank you Bren for your acknowledgement of our efforts. As for the minor criticisms Bren had, let me try to explain:

The full story of the expedition will probably never be published, but if I am able to get to the next Convention feel free to collar me for a private expose of some of the inside information (or if I'm not there I am sure John G3WGV would not object to spilling at least some of the beans. *Ed: John will be talking about the VK9MM DXpedition at the CDXC Dinner, and has promised an article for the March Newsletter*) For the present, suffice to say that some of the decisions taken on the reef regarding operating practices etc. were not taken unanimously, rather they were taken unilaterally by one operator, usually after some protest from the majority of the others. However, when you've got one operator who insists on doing everything his way and will not listen to any argument to the contrary, however well reasoned, there's not a lot that can be done about it, especially when you're stuck on a small desert island! These comments apply to two of the three specific concerns which Bren voiced: participating in a list on 14243, and switching from EU to USA on 40m an hour before the end of the LP opening.

Regarding the list operation, I believe this only occurred once for an hour or so towards the end of the week we were active, on just one of the five stations we had available, so how many "contest-style" QSOs

were lost because of the list operation is hard to judge, but probably it was not very many. However, I reiterate that it was one individual operator who did this against the wishes of the majority of others.

As for 40m long path, it is not true to say that we "plainly did not understand LP prop to EU on 40m": again it was one individual operator who chose to work USA rather than EU, against the advice of the other operators. His reason was that he was fed up with the operating practices of the Europeans who, he claimed, were not listening to instructions and were continuously calling over the top of each other. (So what's new, already? This sort of EU pile-up behaviour happens all the time if you are rare DX. It's not something one would actively encourage, but it's a fact of life and I feel it's something you have to put up with if you choose to go on a DXpedition.)

On the two occasions when I worked 40m long path, on 22nd and 23rd September, I put about 140 EU stations in the log between 0600 and 0735 GMT. Sunrise in G was 0600z at that time: the opening lasted about 90 minutes after EU sunrise but faded out very quickly after that. I QSY'd to 40m USA at the same time on both days, 0740 GMT, when the EU LP opening was no more: prior to that I had put out several calls without getting a reply. The final stations worked on both days were from the British Isles, suggesting that the band had closed (G and EI are generally the last stations to fade out).

Before we arrived on the reef, the whole group agreed that the top priority was to work Europe on all bands which were open to Europe at any time, and the second priority was to work the East Coast of the States, which is also a difficult path from Mellish. While the majority of the operators kept these priorities in mind most of the time, one operator did not like working Europe and if the pile-up was at all troublesome he swapped to a different area of the world at the drop of a hat. Most of us others persevered somewhat longer, and speaking for myself I found that with very few exceptions the pile-ups were very well behaved, be they from EU, JA, USA or wherever.

Bren's third concern, operating CW on 18145 kHz, was a case of one of the other operators arguably being rather TOO accommodating to the pile-up. What happened is that several stations, having already worked him on SSB, called a second time, asking for a CW contact. Instead of telling them "later" (which is what we usually answered to such requests for skeds) he said that he would go to CW, on that same frequency, in ten minutes time. What happened then of course was fairly predictable: there was a large CW pile-up on 18145 and it took a long time to work it down. In retrospect, it was probably not a good idea to operate CW in the phone band, but it was a genuine attempt to be accommodating to the deserving and it was one of those things that "seemed like a good idea at the time".

As for Bren's unnamed correspondents, I have no sympathy at all for the one who said "I listened all day and never heard them". When and where was he listening? Was it before or after we left the reef, or was he listening on 160m in the middle of the day or 10m in the middle of the night? All joking aside, we were there on the published frequencies (generally speaking) every day, and worked hundreds of G stations and thousands of Europeans, so there was really no excuse for not hearing us.

I have slightly more sympathy (but not a lot!) for the guys who heard us but could not (or did not) work us. If you heard us, you would no doubt acknowledge that for the most part we were working stations at a reasonable rate, but obviously under such circumstances there are always some who are calling but who do not get into the log. Some are just plain unlucky, but most of them do not get worked for any number of very good reasons.

Maybe your signal was just too weak (although we had good antennas and worked plenty of stations who were using 100 watts to wire antennas or verticals.) Just because you have a KT-34 beam doesn't mean you are guaranteed a contact, maybe you were not calling on the right frequency or at the right time? Perhaps you did not persevere for long enough: one station (not a true-blue DXer!) later told me that he heard us, called three times and when we did not come back to him he assumed - almost certainly



incorrectly - that he would never get through, so he gave up, after less than five minutes of trying!

When I was operating, I deliberately ignored those stations who were just yelling the last two letters of their call, if I could pick out any who were giving their complete call signs (which was most of the time). If you heard us, called us, but still did not work us, you should ask yourself how come G3MCS/M got through on the first call on 20m SSB from his car, or how G3OZF worked us on seven bands in 24 hours (without arranging any skeds!) Perhaps they were simply lucky, but isn't it more likely that they are just more skilful operators?

"Every time I heard them they were working Japan". Of the eight operators, one - Atsu VK2BEX - is Japanese in origin. It is true that when he was operating he worked a lot of JA stations, but he also worked a lot of EU, USA etc. The other operators arguably over-compensated, asking the JAs to stand-by for hour after hour while we had propagation to Europe or USA. The JAs, being the well-disciplined bunch they are, complied for the most part, but there are tens of thousands of JA DXers, we were only there a week, and we had to work them sometime! Also, bear in mind that when we were beaming to JA we were also beaming to EU - the beam direction is virtually the same from Mellish - so the chances are we would be heard in EU when we were working JA. In fact this worked to EU DXers' advantage, as we never said "QRZ JA only" and frequently worked EU stations through the JA pile-up. When we did so, we invariably asked JA to stand by and took any more Europeans who were about at the time.

I didn't know what to make of the letter from the "keen DXer and FOC member". Leaving aside for the moment the sarcasm about sunbathing (being blown off the island into the sea or catching pneumonia from being soaked to the skin in the rain squalls would have been more likely scenarios!), there are two very good reasons why we were weak at 1600z on Saturday 18th on 14005. Firstly, it was the first day of operation and we had not yet put up the 20m three element mono-band beam; that went up the following day. Secondly, 1600z is 2 o'clock in the morning on Mellish, several hours after the short-path peak: I'm amazed

he heard us at all at that time - it's a quite inappropriate time to expect to make a G - VK9M QSO on 20m! He doesn't say what time he heard us on the Monday [20th September] when we were again weak (1600z? maybe 1700???): but if he had listened on 14195 kHz on 21st September at any time between about 0400 and 1430z he would have had a very good chance of working me, as conditions were excellent on that day and I worked 1100 stations between those times, about half of them EU. (But I forgot, he is an FOCer, so he probably doesn't have a microphone!)

Unfortunately on an island as small as Mellish Reef it proved impossible to run SSB and CW stations at the same time on the same band, so if at any time when there was likely to be propagation he listened on 14005 and heard nothing, the chances are that he would have found a strong signal on 14195 if he had bothered to tune up there. And no, we didn't work more SSB than CW, the final total was pretty close to a 50-50 split. If he insists on only working CW, well we had two FOC members with us, K5VT and G3WGV: John worked an almost identical number of stations on CW as I did on SSB, and with about the same very high proportion of Europeans.

As for "not putting in the effort shown by other DXpeditions", we took almost 3 tons of gear including some big antennas: a four-element monoband yagi for 21 MHz, a three-element monobander for 14 MHz, as well as tribanders for 14-21-28 and 10-18-24 MHz, plus several LF antennas including the big GAP vertical, five HF stations, and eight experienced operators (two of them even FOC members!), we made 44,000 QSOs split fairly equally CW-SSB with some RTTY, and worked about 20% Europeans from the opposite side of the world when, by his admission, conditions were "poor or patchy at best": what more did he expect from us?!

Just because you don't manage to get in the log doesn't mean that it rates as "the second worst [DXpedition] ever". I was amazed to learn after the 9M0S expedition that they made 37,000 QSOs in six days, for although I worked them on three bands, they had weak signals and I hardly heard them at all other than when I made my QSOs, even though Malaysia/Spratty is not a difficult

path from here. I might have been excused for thinking the 9M0S expedition was a poor one, but 37,000 DXers would probably disagree!

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## CW FROM TRISTAN DA CUNHA

*By Roger Western, G3SXW*

### Part One

Tristan da Cunha, population 300, location 37 degrees South and 12 degrees West. Nearest inhabited landfall St. Helena Island 1,300 miles North and Cape Town 1,500 miles East. British. Seven miles across and 7,000 feet at peak.

### A DREAM

Where are you going on this holiday? Tristan da Cunha, says I. Depending on the questioner's age the response was "Where's that?" (under-40's and non-DXers) or alternatively: "Oh yes, the volcano" (over-40's). In 1960 this tiny, remote island hit the world's headlines when the whole population of 300 people was evacuated to England whilst their island erupted. In all other respects it is so isolated that the world at large knows next to nothing about Tristan and its people. Remembering television coverage in 1960 and the very remoteness of the place makes it especially alluring. It has to be simply a fascinating place to visit. Well OK, its rarity as a DXCC country does add somewhat to the attraction!

It all started when my boss decided to offer a long-service reward of extra "sabbatical" leave. Suddenly I was faced with the totally exceptional prospect of four weeks extra paid leave. My brain went into overload contemplating such a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. You guessed it: the priority was

to choose a DXpedition location that suited in all respects but which was not normally achievable due to travelling time. In the normal course of events travelling time is of the essence and if there's no air transport then long sea voyages render a project impractical.

Two locations immediately sprang to mind, both of which I had dreamt about for some long time. Pitcairn Island (VR6) could no doubt prove achievable in all respects, but requires a long sea voyage. Then again sunspots are declining and there must be a risk of going all that way and not hearing any signals from UK/Europe. When a group of JAs showed up and made many thousands of CW contacts on a long DXpedition the attraction of VR6 diminished somewhat.

Which left me suddenly getting very serious about visiting ZD9, which in any case I found the more exciting of the two prospects. You know what they say: "If you don't ask, you don't get". Having spotted ZD9BV's sked frequencies in DX News Sheet I called Andy one evening early in 1993 to ask about visiting the island. His response was unhesitating: come and stay with me. This amateur radio thing is really very special, when a complete stranger is welcomed so warmly.

### RESEARCH

The big issue of course was how to get there. There is no air transport: no landing-strip, too far for helicopters and too rough for sea-planes. An aircraft has never visited the island. The only published vessel that offers passage is the RMS St. Helena. It visits once a year but stays for only 48 hours, not enough for an expedition. The only other regular ship belongs to the South African Department of Environmental Affairs and re-supplies the island each October. It brings you back to Cape Town after a two to three week stay on the island which would suit an expedition nicely. Berths for island visitors



are allocated by the Island administration so it needs to be set up with them. You apply to the island's British Administrator and get permission from the Island Council, which meets quarterly. If demand for berths from islanders and contracted expatriates does not exceed supply (totalling 30 places) then you can come.

Weekly skeds on 21MHz SSB with ZD9BV/ZD9CO lasted from March until departure, in September. Phone calls and FAXes to Tristan Investments in Cape Town, the ship's agents and to the Administrator on the island (via InMarSat) progressed matters but I would not know if a berth would be available until end July. I was wait-listed until early August when it was confirmed that I had a berth. What about a transmitting licence? I should send my UK licence but could I get a specific call-sign? All calls in the International Call-Book are in alphabetical order. The issuing officer is away in St. Helena and returns in late August. We'll ask him for ZD9SXW then. That too came through OK.

Communications with the island are not easy. Mail of course can take many weeks depending on sailing dates. A telephone link on HF radio via Cape Town needs to be booked at certain times and then the person has to be waiting for the call at Tristan Radio, there being no telephones in the homes. The Administrator's office has the InMarSat telephone and FAX link. Those skeds with Andy were indeed vital to pull the trip together.

Much time was spent tracking down information about the island. You don't just walk into your local book-shop and select from a range of travelogues about Tristan da Cunha! The almanacs gave me some introductory basic data, but the breakthrough came when locating a book written by Alan Crawford: "Tristan da Cunha and The Roaring Forties". This described the fascinating history of the island

and its community and described the way of life up until 1980. Then G4FAM told me about a TV programme some years earlier and tracked down the production company that had made it. Thanks Cris - it was a major input at that stage. They lent me their master copy and a second video was later uncovered thanks to K1DG, so I had gleaned some impressions of the place. From the book I discovered the naval chart reference and got a copy from Admiralty House - the only map of any kind available.

All the basics were falling into place, then Andy said that his sister-in-law and husband are in UK, staying just north of London for one year and will be returning on the S.A. Agulhas with me. An evening in a local restaurant saw me falling over myself to ask hundreds of questions on all manner of burning issues. Thank you Conrad and Sharon for all your help.

What a prospect: a trip to what is deservedly known as "The Loneliest Island in the World" and the potential for massive CW pile-ups while offering a rarity for the DXers of the world.

## PREPARATIONS

Every Monday evening I had a list of questions for Andy. Signals were often weak but we made it every time. I would bring my TS930S and a linear amplifier but what about antennas? Andy had a triband 3-element beam for 20/15/10 metres and yes the SWR was fine on the CW end. I would take or ship antennas for the rest of the bands. By August decisions were being made and it was going ahead. I booked the dates out of my business diary, an unheard of six weeks absence and my newly trained assistant suddenly had to work to one serious dead-line!

Flight to Cape Town, hotel, currency, cameras and film, tools and spares, and my pals Nigel G3TXF and Ian G3WVG

definitely decided they couldn't come. That was a big blow but not too surprising as such a long trip away from businesses and family really couldn't be managed. I'm taking advantage of my new-found single life with a son now at university, free as a bird. But what great pals - desperately hating not to come they nonetheless joined in and helped all the way with preparations.

I exchanged FAXes and telephone calls with Al, ZS1AAX in Cape Town querying aluminium poles, generators, coax, hotels, tools, weather conditions. Again, not having previously met Al I have to emphasise how wonderfully helpful complete strangers can be when you ask them to help. Thanks Al, no longer a stranger!

Bookings were confirmed and paid for to fly Cape Town return and for the berth on the Agulhas. There remained the question of antennas. The A3WS Cushcraft 3ele beam for 18/24MHz was a natural choice, and thanks to K7GE for helping with arrangements to purchase and ship to S.Africa. After asking a lot of questions I decided to take a chance on a new product, the GAP Voyager DX-IV, a vertical for 160/80/40 metres. That too was sent out to Cape Town by U.P.S., leaving only 30 metres to resolve. In Swaziland TXF had made a super vertical out of the telescoping tubes of a Butternut HF6V by just leaving off all the coils and paraphernalia. I had one in the garage so the last band was catered for. I also prepared a 160metre dipole as back-up, which could be then cut down for any band.

Keyer, connecting cables, wattmeter, torch, soldering gear, computer and paper-logs for back-up, slide and print film, spare batteries, connectors of all types, fuses, compass, waterproofs, medicines, passport. The list just grew and grew with not a single item that was not essential. Close to departure there remained a couple of major issues. Mains electricity on the island is off between

midnight and 7a.m. so I should take a generator from Cape Town to access the LF bands at night. An islander returning on the Agulhas was taking one and I could borrow it, manna from heaven. This trip was fated to be successful, everything seemed to be falling into place so easily. In the final run-up to an expedition its usually a matter of desperately battling against unexpected problems but this just didn't seem to happen this time.

Then a small piece appeared in G3FKM's Radio Communication column and the phone went right away. A voice said "I'm G4URJ and it seems we'll be on the Agulhas to Tristan da Cunha together". Some other DXpeditioner that I'd not heard about? Not exactly: Gervace turned out to be the locum Island Administrator, seconded from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and he happened to be a licensed ham. Friends in high places! What did I say about things falling so easily into place? Would I like the Consulate in Cape Town to make a hotel reservation and maybe arrange transport from the airport? Thank you very much.

Finally, the computer was causing some hash on certain frequencies. The supplier couldn't sell me a replacement AC converter but ferrite rings seemed to solve most of the problem so I elected not to invest in a new computer. Something of a major error of judgement as I finished up logging on paper on most bands and keying in after each operating session.

And still more finally, several friends insisted that I couldn't go without a video recorder. Never having touched one before I was hesitant but G3WVG just showed up one day with one and told me how to use it. Terrific.

I'd been watching WWV data and was concerned that sunspots had declined badly throughout the summer. There might not be any propagation on 24/28MHz at all the way



things were. Fingers crossed for an equinox lift as is normal in October.

All the planning, check-lists, detailed arrangements cannot be described in a few short sentences. For example, the GAP vertical was assembled and repacked: a day's work, followed by panic arrangements to get a replacement capacitor shipped from USA to provide an acceptable resonant frequency on top band. It didn't arrive in time so my local stores were scoured for silver-mica capacitors that could be lashed together to make up 6200pf (a total of eight components as it turned out!). Another afternoon consumed.

## DEPARTURE

The day arrives and you get philosophical: if its not ready its not ready. I stared balefully at my airline ticket that stated "23Kg" as the baggage allowance and then burst out laughing: I had a total of over 100Kg!. There were five pieces of check-in luggage weighing some 75Kg. On this occasion British Airways were most ungenerous and not prepared to bargain, but they didn't notice my pronounced limp from hand-carrying the linear transformer, computer, video, tools, keyer, headphones, 160m dipole, coax .!

My son drove me to Heathrow airport and I knew everything would go well because G4DY0 had confirmed he was on air traffic control duty that day! Feelings of anticipation were unbearable. Travelling to places like Swaziland, the Solomon Islands, The Gambia, Morocco had been major life experiences but suddenly the prospect of visiting so remote an island caused the most enormous wave of excitement to wash over me. A prodigious adventure!

My mind was concentrated on the difficult task of lugging 40Kg of hand-baggage in such a way as to convince airline staff that it contained naught but cotton-wool. Any

expeditioner will readily identify with this acquired skill. We then settled down to twelve hours of airline food and non-stop movies, overnight but with no more than a light doze in a full economy section.

## CAPE TOWN

We arrived in early spring (September 20th) at Jan Smuts airport at lunch time. Clean air - that's nice, and temperature a comfortable 65F. The large Land Rover easily accommodated Gervace, myself and all the considerable luggage and we checked into the Garden Court Hotel in the business section of town. Apart from some rowdies on the road into town we witnessed no signs of unrest anywhere during our stay there. I liked Cape Town: clean, lots of space, very civilised, nice scenery.

Schedules had been set such that we had a couple of days prior to the ship's departure, not just for last minute local arrangements but after all when a ship sails once a year you really don't want to risk missing it. Actually it all happened at a comfortable pace. A visit to the one local ham store was useful, along with a ride up the cable car to Table Mountain for a stunning view of the bay. Dinner one evening with Tom, who had stayed with Andy and Lorraine three years earlier, provided an invaluable source of advice and information, as well as five more small pieces of luggage to load on the boat. These were presents but were somewhat lighter than my luggage, consisting of such items as Rice Crispies!

The TS930 was rapidly installed in the hotel bedroom, without which it looked strangely unfurnished. A 15 metre dipole draped from the light fittings (sealed windows) didn't even pick up the BBC, being a room on the first floor jammed in between sky-scrapers. All I heard was hash and squirlies but not to worry, there was plenty of time to play radios over the next few weeks.

A local phone call to Tristan Investments confirmed that the two long boxes (beams) had indeed arrived and been stowed already on the ship. We were asked to deliver to the ship one day before sailing any items that wouldn't go into the cabins. Cabin luggage was restricted to one suitcase per person, so I had much to go into the lock-up. Excitement mounted as I loaded that stuff into a taxi and got my first view of the S.A. Agulhas, docked in Cape Town harbour. It's big! In fact its 3,600 tons dead-weight, 300 feet long with 42 crew.

That day also saw a memorable meeting of semi-strangers from across the globe, when Al ZS1AAX joined Gervace and I on the quay-side and then at a local hostelry, along with much photography. We were due to sail the following day at 1600 and should report at 1400 for boarding.

## S.A. AGULHAS

Chaos! We did sail on time, well only an hour late, so actually the chaos was no doubt much less than it appeared. The quay was filled with crates and boxes, and VAST quantities of alcoholic beverages, all being loaded with the ship's crane, along with last-minute fresh produce and three vans destined for the island. I sneaked a look at the manifest for delivery to Gough Island and did some mental arithmetic: there was enough South African brandy to provide each member of the seven-man team with one bottle per day for their year-long stay!!! Not to mention the many pallets of beer.

I was shown to my cabin by a cheerful chap who told me he was the ship's cook, a useful ally, and my luck was really in - I was the only passenger not to share a cabin for the voyage. Perhaps news of my snoring had preceded me! Then exploration. Here's the lounge and the bar, the galley, the helicopter deck - I'll find the rest later, I thought. The rest? There was none - that was it, except

for the bridge and the cargo holds which were out of bounds.

We were to sail direct to Tristan da Cunha. In previous years the voyage had been Cape Town to Gough Island, three days at Gough then Tristan, then laying weather buoys in the Atlantic down towards Antarctica, back to Tristan, then Gough for three more days then home. This year for the first time sufficient pressure had been brought to bear to go straight to Tristan, then Gough etc. and straight back to Cape Town from Tristan. This meant six full extra days on the island - magic! The down-side was not seeing Gough Island but the prospect of those extra six days of pile-ups soon cheered me up again, in about three micro-seconds!

Finally under way, the harbour pilot jumped skilfully aboard his tug, the Agulhas gave several hoots and we all gravitated to the sides to bid farewell to South Africa, bedecked with cameras and video recorders. With Cape Town still huge on the horizon the ship's captain, one Bill Leith, announced that we would park up (forgive my non-nautical phraseology!) in order to secure the cargo. I guess that meant they'd not had time to do it all before departure but needed to stick to the schedule for immigration and pilot. Except that there had been no immigration that I noticed. We just sat there for four hours watching the sun going down and the breath-taking view of Table Mountain, and then Cape Town by night.

That was when some folks learned their first hard lesson of the trip. At one point a strange multi-toned electronic gong was sounded. There was a minor but discernible movement of seemingly seasoned travellers in one direction so I decided to investigate. Ha, dinner! Many missed that meal and went scavenging later in the evening for a bread roll or a piece of fruit, but knew only too well for the rest of the trip what that gong signified. This was clearly no cruise liner. It was a working ship that carried passengers



as a concession in adequately civilised style but with no frills. The cabins and lounge area were comfortable, chess sets and board games were provided (including a South African version of Trivial Pursuits!) as well as occasional video screenings. The bar was opened regularly, once it got itself organised on the second day.

Meal and bar times were the only structure to the day but I quickly found that two meals were plenty. They were self-service, plentiful, creative and tasted good. That bar was dangerous: a beer was one Rand (20 pence or 30 cents) and a bottle of brandy or vodka five Rands (one pound or \$1.50).

I slept well that night, after a day of excitement and manhandling luggage and of meeting 40 or so new ship-mates. The passengers were a fascinating group, consisting of several returning islanders, the 11-man helicopter crew (air and ground) from the S.A. Air Force, the 7-man replacement team for Gough, plus several specialists journeying to Tristan: dentist and assistant, two asthma researchers, an education consultant, a conservationist to inspect Gough, an optometrist, two scientists from Cape Town museum to collect the skeleton of an unusual species of whale, and would you believe just one other fare-paying tourist besides myself, an ornithologist.

It was stimulating to meet up with so many interesting folk and get to know them. We had a 5-6 day voyage ahead of us, so plenty of time to do so. The young South Africans were tremendously lively and good company, the ornithologist had strangely similar motivations and thought processes as do DXers!

### G3SXW/MM

One of the hundreds of questions at the preparatory stage was to obtain permission to operate on board. I was expecting bureaucratic nonsense but Captain Leith

simply said there'd be no problem so long as I strictly adhered to the instructions of the ship's radio officer. I already knew from ZD9BV that this was Pat, a co-operative chap. Sure enough when I found him the first day at sea he said no problem and maybe the ship's meteorological chaps wouldn't mind if I used a space on one of their benches. A major objective of the voyage was weather observations so there was a three-person team of young South Africans with a large laboratory, computers and equipment, twice-daily helium balloons etc. - all very fascinating. The eighteen weather buoys to be laid at precise co-ordinates around the Atlantic would transmit data every 90 seconds to satellites and would float with the currents.

Andrew kindly bolted my rig to the desk in his office (an ominous sign I thought), right at the top of the ship above the heli-deck. In an isolated corner I found a narrow plank to which was rapidly attached a 20-metre dipole, lashed to railings. It resonated low of course being so close to much metal-work and needed tweaking. As the ship was sailing due West I made sure to hang the dipole on the starboard side (yes, that's the right-hand side when facing forward) so signals could take-off to the North, with all that metal behind it. Twenty metres wasn't the best choice of bands as there was little propagation in the daytimes but early evenings saw excellent openings to Europe and regular rag-chews with many pals during the voyage. The very first QSO was with 8J1RL, the Japanese Antarctic base which not only excited me as rare DX but fascinated my met friends and got them twiddling with my receiver for the rest of the trip when I wasn't operating. Some converts to ham radio maybe.

This was all barefoot of course but on the last day Pat told me some passengers were complaining of interference to broadcast reception so I went to twenty watts. That seemed not to restrict my rag-chewing at all,



still with 579-589 reports from UK and USA! Its amazing to us land-lubbers just what a fantastic take-off all that salt water provides.

Hamming on the voyage gave me a major advantage over the other passengers who were mostly bored off their heads. It was great fun to do /MM for the first time in my life and I much enjoyed those 150 contacts or so. It also served to keep the DX world apprised of progress. The one disappointment was not to contact ZD9BV en route until the last night. I almost wish I hadn't because Andy reported severe storms on the island including structural damage. Would we be able to land?

## ROARING FORTIES

Tristan da Cunha lies at 37 degrees South, the equivalent latitude to Lisbon, Athens, Washington DC and San Francisco. But the weather patterns are not what you would expect. Those latitudes are famous for their Roaring winds and currents coming up from the Antarctic. Early in the voyage the sea and wind were calm. Throughout we had air and sea temperatures of around 50-60F and high pressure. Of course the computers in the met station gave me detailed data on everything I wanted to know. The screen was updated every one second and was immediately by my left elbow when operating /MM, so I was able to bore my pals with all the numbers about heading, position, speed, wind speed/direction, sea temperature, pressure, you name it!

Much time was spent out on the helicopter deck. One afternoon a few brave souls sunbathed in the lee of the wind but it was mostly the bird-watchers and fresh-air seekers. The bird population was captivating. Throughout the trip we were accompanied by petrels, shearwaters and of course the magnificent wandering albatrosses. These are the biggest species of bird in the world with twelve-foot wing-span

and they follow the ship ever hopeful of food. My birding pals informed me that they spend the first seven years of life at sea simply skimming the wave-tops hunting for food, mostly squid and small fish. After 15,000Km of travel they return to breed, mostly in the areas around New Zealand. I learnt on this voyage that much patience is needed to achieve worthwhile photographs and most shots are unsuccessful. Occasionally they would skim across the very corner of the ship, in a magnificent fly-past parade. Outstandingly beautiful and I now understand those stories of ancient mariners benefiting from their company. I spent hours watching them. Whales were spotted but I was never on deck at the time. A shoal of seals failed to keep up with us on the approach to Cape Town but the birds were indication enough of distance from land according to species.

Only on the return voyage did I discover that the ship's new stabilising system was not working outbound. I kept commenting on the amount of roll in relatively calm seas. Fifteen degrees was normal for much of the journey and many passengers disappeared to their cabins for long stretches. I'm one of those fortunate few who don't know what sea-sickness feels like. Indeed, the rougher it is the more exciting. There was much to be learned about the sea. A casual observation would suggest mill-pond conditions, so why was it rolling so badly? A closer inspection revealed long, slow rollers coming in at around 3-6 feet and they just kept coming, unaffected by wind direction. We had to head due West for 1,500 miles so really couldn't sail around them.

On the fourth day we went through a weather front and it got bad. Winds got up to 40 knots and the sea boiled. We watched the indicator in the met office showing 20-25 degrees roll non-stop for hours. For once I had a genuine excuse for CW errors as my chair kept sliding around the room! Then the captain decided that we needed to sit and



wait through the night for a morning arrival at Tristan so he turned into the rollers. At that moment I was whooping it up on the heli-deck with a couple of guys, enjoying the roller-coaster effects and snapping away with cameras. I noticed the turn in the wake, and suddenly felt uncomfortable at the beginning of the next roll. I'm no experienced sailor but some sixth-sense said that I didn't like this any more. I grabbed on to a railing just as the ship went into a 45 degree roll and was genuinely scared when I saw a guy hurtling towards the low railing, unable to stand still on the empty sloping deck. His natural instincts stood him in good stead as he fell flat on his back, spread-eagled and slithered feet-first into the railings. He would have flipped over for sure. During that roll all the cabins were flooded on one side of the ship, furniture was thrown everywhere, bar stock suffered major damage and it was amazing that no-one was seriously injured. The ship, we later found out, had never before recorded more than a 52 degree roll. The Captain was later heard to comment that "We like to make each voyage momentous"!!

*To be continued in the March Newsletter.  
(This article is also to be published in Focus)*

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### JOINT CDXC/CDXC DXPEDITION?

F5LMJ has proposed a joint Chiltern DX Club and Clipperton DX Club IOTA DXpedition in the Summer of 1994, to an English or Scottish island. F5LMJ believes that there are two or three (including himself) Clipperton DXers intersted. Any CDXC member who is interested should contact Martin, G3ZAY on 0223 424 714

## G3NUG VISIT TO WEST MALAYSIA JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1994

CALL: 9M2/G3NUG

AS-072 Pangkor Is  
Friday 14 January - Friday 21 January

AS-058 Langkawi Is  
Saturday 22 January - Friday 28 January

AS-015 Penang Is  
Saturday 29 January - Thursday 10 February

Preferred frequencies:  
14.260 -5, 18.140 +-5, SSB only

Will listen for Europe between 1400z and 1600z on 14.260., no lists!

There has been no activity from AS-072 or AS-058 for about 3 years.

All direct QSL requests will be cleared by end February.

73 de Neville

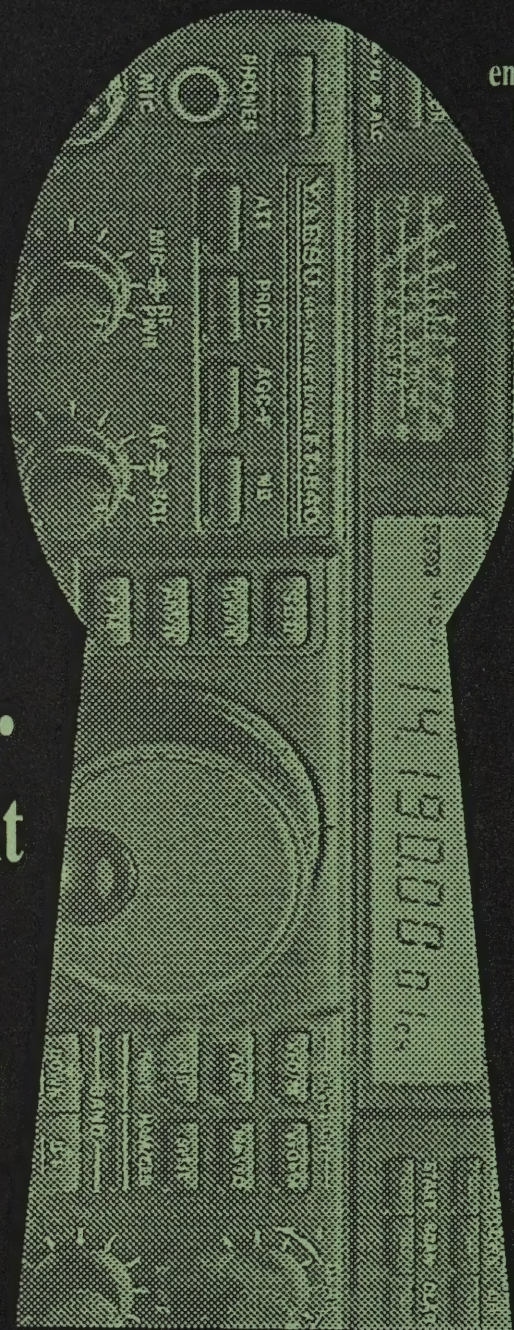
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### CDXC NEWSLETTER

I hope you've enjoyed reading this issue of the Newsletter. Remember the newsletter is only as good as the articles and information I can get hold of. Much of the newsletter consists of articles by regular contributors, and many thanks to them for their invaluable input. It would be nice to receive something, however small, from some of the other members. Why not make it *your* New Year's resolution to send me something for the next issue? Anything about HF operating, DXing, contesting etc. would be most welcome.  
73 Alan, G3PMR, Newsletter Editor.



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